

Reflection: Name a time that you followed your conscience in objection to the status quo. Why did it matter? How often do you see others do the same?

This reflection will be posted on our homepage under “This Week’s Chalice Quest”.

#*Opening Hymn 346

Come, Sing a Song with Me

New Member Ceremony

Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Society Antiphonal Covenant between the Congregation and New Members

Minister:

I invite forward our President, Mary Strieff, and the Co-Chairs of the Congregational Life Committee, Alice Fleming & Jennifer Farmer-Etzal. I invite **Arline Morrissey, and, Paula Galagher**, to come forward. For over 57 years, among the most sacred moments in this congregation’s life has been those times when we welcome new members. Today, we are pleased to welcome Arline and Paula as new members of SUUS.

Congregational Life Co-Chairperson:

Here you will find curious minds and kindred spirits. We seek to be a people of good will, who assume good intentions, and who listen thoughtfully to one another, even when we may disagree. Here, we commit not only to your spiritual growth, but also the spiritual growth of all those who share our path.

Introduction of New Members

- Arline Morrissey
- Paula Gallagher

Board President:

Arline & Paula, those who choose to become members can claim a proud heritage of religious and spiritual freedom. In freely choosing to come together, we accomplish so much more than alone, working to create a community of love, justice, and peace.

Will the current members of this congregation please rise as we enter into covenant with Arline & Paula?

Congregation: (please stand)

With joy, we welcome you as new members. We encourage you to speak your mind with compassion; to love without prejudice; to live with integrity; to respond

courageously to the demands of justice; to work to fulfill the ideals of our congregational covenant, and to participate in our democratic process. We pledge to support you in your search for truth, to celebrate with you in times of joy, and, to help you in times of sorrow.

Minister: Arline & Paula, is it your choice to join this congregation as a member?

New Members: It is.

A Blessing

Minister: May the embrace of our community offer comfort and courage in the unfolding of life’s joys and sorrows.

Congregation: May we, in seeking truth and justice, become effective instruments of service to humanity; making fruitful, our common ministries.

Minister: May we, by our example, nurture into being the Spirit that is Life and Love.

Congregation: May its presence and our love endure.

Minister: So may it be.

Story “King Sigismund, The Only Unitarian King”

Ava Partch; Ned & Maisy Jobson; Sarah Swenson; CoA Advisors

Offertory Words

February Share the Plate

Here, we share with generosity what treasure we have with others whose needs are greater than our own. Each week we donate half of our total cash offering to a non-profit program that serves others. This month your cash contributions will go to Literary Volunteers Valley Shore, CT.

It provides free and confidential one-on-one tutoring in literacy skills to over 220 shoreline residents from over 65 countries. Volunteer tutors help students improve their reading and writing skills; become more adept at managing their lives, assets, and finances; and participate in an English-speaking world.

One student, one tutor, one word at a time. Please give generously.

Offertory Music *Profetiza, Pueblo Mio*, Rosa Martha Zárate Macias

Amy Buckley, Soloist

Prophesy, oh my people, prophesy one more time. Let your voice be the echo of the outcries of all oppressed. Prophesy, oh my people, prophesy, one more time. Announce to them the coming of a new society. I sanctify you, prophet. Banish all doubt and fear. Be faithful to your mission; the quest that leads us on.

#Sing the Young People Out *Children’s Recessional (see back of hymnal)*

Honoring Our Joys and Sorrows

In the coming moments, we will share with one another our joys and sorrows. We do so in two ways.

(1) You may come forward to the mic to speak (or, if needed we will can bring a mic to you).

(2) Afterwards, you may come forward to light a candle silently, if you prefer.

Verbal Expression

If there are those among us who would like to share their joy or sorrow from the microphone, please come forward now (or raise your hand as needed).

Silent Expression

In a moment, Nick will begin playing our musical meditation, “Dear Theodosia.” It is a song by Lin-Manual Miranda, from the show Hamilton. It is a song about one father’s love for his daughter, Theodosia, and another father’s love for his son, Philip. It is about their humility and commitment to creating a strong nation for their children and to make the world right for their children who, they know, will someday excel their wildest dreams.

And, now let us enter into a time of quiet reflection.

[Bell]

In this time let us slow down the pace of life, see past the distractions, and pay attention to that which, perhaps, you’ve been too busy to notice. It could be a joy, it could be sorrow, it could be something with which you are struggling . . .

In these moments, ground your feet on the floor (as you are able), relax your body . . . breathe deeply. Reflect in silence on that voice longing to be heard . . . acknowledge it . . .

As the spirit moves you, you may come forward to light a candle for that which is on your mind or in your heart.

[Bell]

Musical Meditation *Dear Theodosia, Miranda*

Reflection

Prophesy, It’s Challenge and Spirit

Rev. Lloyd

This is a month during which some will celebrate at least two Presidents who led this country from chaos to order, Washington and Lincoln. It is also a month when we will celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Susan B. Anthony,¹ on February 16th. Anthony was a member of the First Unitarian Church of Rochester, NY. And, it is black history month, and we will remember and honor our black Unitarian Universalist fore bearers on February 23rd. And so, it seems to me a good time to explore and name the qualities expected of those prophets who are guided by a moral compass.

Let’s first distinguish and define the conditions that make a prophet stand out, away from the crowd and the rest of humanity. What makes them different from us ordinary folks?

Traditionally, a prophet is an instrument of G*d², called to change a society that has, in one way or another, lost its way. It has become a place of oppression, a place where the poor suffer and the wealthy thrive, a place of inequity, a place where we treat others as we would not want to be treated.

I want to emphasize that traditionally, from the prophet’s point of view, his or her power and authority comes from G*d, they speak with the word of G*d in their mouth, they use the power of G*d to do ... to do what? To bring about change in a world of inequity and suffering. Their mission is to right the wrongs, turn things around, and to

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Unitarian_Church_of_Rochester February 1, 2020

² Rev. Lloyd does not spell out the word, “G*d,” because the term is loaded with many misconceptions and preconceptions. That which is the spirit of life and community, the spirit of love and death, the spirit of humanity, cannot be relegated to one three letter word. Rev. Lloyd invites others to reconsider the meanings of this word, and, to contemplate whether it is a noun or verb. Is G*d Love? The reader is invited to expand their vision and understanding . . .

do two seemingly counterintuitive things. First, they must set themselves apart from their society, stepping outside their culture, to be able to see from G*d’s perspective, what’s wrong, and how things need to change. Think about that. Think about how hard it is to step outside of all you have known. Think how hard it is to go against the grain of the way things have always been. Think how hard it is to give up the connections you have that bind you to your people, so that you may help them change their world for the better.

Second, having set oneself outside the world you’ve always known, then you must do something even harder. That is, to awaken the people, to get them to listen, to get them to believe, to get them to follow. To get them to sacrifice most or all they’ve known, so that the people, their people, can live better lives, and, from a biblical point of view, most importantly, be reconciled to G*d, who expects better of humanity.

PAUSE

You begin to get a sense of why a prophet filled with the power and authority of G*d, and willing to sacrifice their connections to their kindred, start to look a little different, and maybe a little scary. Having sacrificed all that’s meaningful to them in return for their relationship with G*d, we fear how they might change us. Will it be kind? Will it be painful? What will their actions mean for our lives? Do we want them in our lives?

I mentioned a couple of weeks ago, that if you take this faith seriously, if you challenge yourself to grow beyond who you know yourself to be today, you will be radically changed by this faith. For most of us, if we knew this before we crossed the threshold of this faith, we’d politely decline. But, later, having crossed that threshold, we find it hard to comprehend that we might NOT have crossed it!

So, what of us? Unitarian Universalists. On what moral authority do we draw upon to step outside the ease of our own culture to say to others: “something must change!”? Some of us may draw on an understanding of G*d as Love, or a benevolent power in this world that guides the better angels of our nature. Some of us may be drawn by a Spirit of Life and Love, that we do not call G*d, but which nonetheless draws us toward justice and compassion.

And, for some of us, our moral compass is not grounded in G*d or a Spirit, but instead in the power of our own conscience and belonging to one another. A conscience that knows right from wrong; knows kindness prevails over hate, eventually; knows that healing and wholeness will always trump hate and destruction. The beauty of this faith is that it has room for all these ways of drawing down the courage and authority to

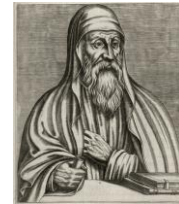
advocate for change. I believe the *through line* through all these sources of G*d-given or self-driven power, is the conscience.

Now I know that the conscience isn’t an organ you can locate in the human brain. But, I submit to you that the conscience compels our behavior just as much as the Spirit does. The word, conscience,³ means the sense or conscience of the moral goodness or blameworthiness of one’s own conduct, intentions, or character, *together with* a feeling of obligation to do right or be good.

Whether grounded in the metaphysical or in the depths of our humanity, there is something beyond and within that asks us to make a fair and just world, if not for ourselves, then for our children. In a faith where revelation is not sealed, where truth is found in a variety of sacred and other texts, the prophets of this faith have drawn on their own conscience to stand in this world, and to say there must be a better way, a way that makes more sense, a way that is kind, a way that builds the world, instead of destroying it.

Who were some of our prophets?

Origen of Alexandria, 185 - 253 AD.⁴ He lived before the Nicene Creed. He was a Christian prophet who taught that though Jesus was great, he wasn’t equal to G*d. From Origen’s point of view, G*d came first. He denied hell, and said all would be reconciled to G*d, even Satan. There are those that say that, after the Apostles, he was the greatest teacher of the early church.⁵



Michael Servetus, 1511 - 1553, a Spanish theologian, physician and humanist, who published the book, “On the Errors of the Trinity” which pointed out that the Trinitarian dogma isn’t in the bible. He “sharply rejected the idea of predestination and the idea that God had condemned souls to Hell regardless of worth or merit.”⁶ And, he was burned at the stake by Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland.

³<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conscience> January 31, 202

⁴<https://www.iep.utm.edu/origen-of-alexandria/> February 1, 2020

⁵<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Origen/Theological-System> January 31, 2020

⁶<https://msuu.org/about/who-was-michael-servetus> February 1, 2020

Hosea Ballou, an American, 1771 - 1852, a universalist who argued in his book “Treatise on Atonement” that the “atoning spirit of love was available not only to Christians, but to all people, irrespective of “names, sects, denominations, people, or kingdoms.’ In no case would anyone be sent to eternal punishment by a loving God. No sin was that great; salvation was universal.”⁷



William Ellery Channing, 1780 - 1842, a Unitarian who argued for “salvation by character” meaning it is what we do, not say, that matters.

As we get into the 19th century, women took center stage to fight for human rights, for prison and mental health reform, for temperance in drinking, for women’s suffrage and education reform, for abolition, and more. According to Dorothy May Emerson, from the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century: ‘Women (as opposed to men) were often the ones to activate and demonstrate the values of their faith, such as freedom, tolerance, acceptance, and individual rights. They translated liberal theology into real work to promote justice in the world and, at the same time, [they] struggled with inequities in their own religious institutions.’⁸

Some of our Unitarian Universalist women prophets were:

Margaret Fuller, 1810 – 1850, An “[author], editor, and teacher, who contributed significantly to . . . mid-nineteenth century reform movements . . . Her major work, **Woman in the Nineteenth Century**, published in 1845, profoundly affected the women's rights movement which had its formal beginning at Seneca Falls, New York, three years later.”⁹



⁷ <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/ballou-manifesto> January 31, 2020

⁸ <https://uufv.freeyellow.com/id9.html> January 31, 2020

⁹ <http://uudb.org/articles/margaretfuller.html> February 1, 2020



Clara Barton, 1821 - 1912 “. . . the angel of Civil War battlefields and founder of the American Red Cross.” She was a Universalist.

Susan B. Anthony, 1820 – 1906, a woman who fought for human rights for all, including the enslaved and women, and promoted temperance.



Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, 1825-1911, “. . . an African-American writer, lecturer, and political activist, who promoted abolition, civil rights, women's rights, and temperance. She helped found or held high office in several national . . . organizations. [Today,] she is best remembered for her poetry and fiction, which [offered] moral uplift and counseled the oppressed [on] how to free themselves from their . . . [conditions].”¹⁰

Olympia Brown, 1835 – 1926, the first woman to graduate from a theological school in America, and first to be ordained and recognized by a denomination, in this case, The Universalist Church of America. She fought for women’s rights and lived to vote in 1920.¹¹



Frances Gage, 1808 – 1884. In addition to raising 8 children, “Gage [assumed with ease the] roles of public organizer and orator. She was a talented public speaker for more than 30 years to audiences of both men and women. Her [lectures] covered her "triune cause"—first, abolition; second, women's rights; and third, temperance.”¹²

She said, Permit me to draw a comparison between the situation of our forefathers in the wilderness, (who had not) so much as even a bridle path through its dark depths, and our present [situation]. The old land of moral, social and political privilege seems too narrow for our wants; . . . [instead] we see clearly a better country that we might

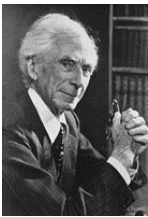
¹⁰ <http://uudb.org/articles/francesharper.html> February 1, 2020

¹¹ <http://uudb.org/articles/olympiabrown.html> February 1, 2020

¹² <http://uudb.org/articles/francesgage.html> February 1, 2020

inhabit. But there are mountains of established law and custom to overcome; a wilderness of prejudice to be subdued; a powerful foe of selfishness and self-interest to overthrow; wild beasts of pride, envy, malice and hate to destroy. But for the sake of our children and our children’s children, we have entered upon the work, hoping and praying that we may be guided by wisdom, sustained by love, and led and cheered by the earnest hope of doing good.”¹³

The 20th century saw more UU prophets working for peace, particularly in the Vietnam Era; for women’s choice; civil rights; racial equality; nuclear disarmament; youth empowerment; the environment; and, more. The list of Unitarian Universalists living their prophetic convictions and speaking from their own conscience, includes:



Bertrand Russell, 1872- 1970, “philosopher, mathematician, and political activist[,] [He] was a prolific and controversial writer on an extraordinary range of topics, including education, social science, politics, ethics, and religion. [He won the 1950 Nobel Prize for literature for his book on the “philosophical works . . . of service to moral civilization]”.¹⁴

Linus Pauling, 1901 – 1994, “a distinguished American chemist, [who] helped . . . integrate chemistry with quantum theory and founded the discipline now called molecular biology. From 1945 on, much of his time was devoted to antiwar activities and stopping the atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons. He is the only person to win two unshared Nobel Prizes, one for chemistry and one for peace.”¹⁵



Emily Taft Douglas, 1899- 1994,” . . . a congresswoman, civil rights activist, early feminist, actress, author, and Unitarian lay leader. Throughout her life she promoted international cooperation for the preservation of peace and for democratic cultural exchange.”¹⁶

¹³ <https://uuflv.freeyellow.com/id9.html> January 31, 2020

¹⁴ <http://uudb.org/articles/russellfamily.html> February 1, 2020

¹⁵ <http://uudb.org/articles/linuspauling.html> February 1, 2020

¹⁶ <http://uudb.org/articles/emilytaftdouglas.html> February 1, 2020

Whitney Young Jr., 1921 – 1971, “. . . an American civil rights leader. He spent most of his career working to end employment discrimination in the United States and turning the National Urban League from a relatively passive civil rights organization into one that aggressively worked for “socio-economic equality . . . for the . . . disenfranchised.”¹⁷



And, what of those of us living today? In this day when it sometimes seems that the world has lost its moral compass . . . where are our prophets? Where have they gone?

PAUSE

Because we follow our conscience, to be a prophet don’t have to leave our communities and loved ones. Indeed, as a people bound to one another, we draw courage, hope and faith, from each other. Our communities exist to support the challenges we face today. We can follow our conscience without leaving one another behind, right where we are, right where we live.

I offer you these words from Mary Shawn Copeland, Professor Emerita of Systematic Theology at Boston College. She says, “Learning when and how, to what, and to whom to give our yes and our no is a lifelong project. It is learning to live not merely in dull balance or tedious moderation but in passionate, disciplined choice and action. It is learning to find support and challenge, courage and correction, as we live out our choices.”

PAUSE

We are not required to reject our communities, but we are required to live our life to the fullest, and leave in our wake, kindness and compassion. To what is your conscience awakened? To what will you say “yes”, or “no”. What does your conscience tell you, you must do, if not for yourself or neighbor, then for the children? What touches your heart? What calls you to make a fairer and kinder world? To what, will you say “yes.”?

¹⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whitney_Young February 1, 2020

***Hymn 121** *We'll Build a Land, v. 1, 4*

This hymn was written by Carolyn McDade, someone who once attended our seminary in Chicago. It calls us to say "yes", to act together to heal the world and each other. It calls us understand that the power that some call G*d, is Love, a love that sustains the best of everything. If you wish, you may choose to use the word Love, instead of the word God.

***Closing Words & Extinguishing the Chalice**

Please remain standing as you are able. In this season of flu and respiratory illnesses, instead of joining hands, I invite you to touch elbows as you are willing.

We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. We extinguish this flame, but know it is our duty and privilege to carry it forward into the world, sharing our light with others light. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

Let the congregation say, Amen.

Please be seated to sing our closing song.

Closing Song 1057 *Go Lifted Up*

Silent Reflection

Let us sit together in silence as we absorb the message and meaning of today's service.

* Please rise in body or spirit.

Latecomers may be seated.